Orchestra Hall (Paradise Theatre)
3711 Woodward Avenue
Detroit
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MICH-271



PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

# ORCHESTRA HALL
(Now Orchestra Hall - Paradise Theatre)

Location: 3711 Woodward Avenue, at the northwest corner of Parsons Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan.

USGS Detroit Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.330360.4690340

Present Owner: The Save Orchestra Hall Committee, Inc., 3711 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

Present Use: Performing arts and concert hall, now called Orchestra Hall - Paradise Theatre. Restoration is in progress.

Statement of Significance: Orchestra Hall resembles the typical theatre of its day, with a restrained and elegant adaptation of Renaissance style that preceded the exhuberant eclecticism of the next decade. It was designed with emphasis on concert requirements, but was fully equipped also for use as a motion-picture theatre. Its appearance and superb acoustics reflect the ability of C. Howard Crane, a Detroit architect who became one of the most notable national and international architects of the "Movie Palace." Crane's Orchestra Hall, Detroit's first true concert hall, was considered to be one of the finest in the country. Built originally to obtain the services of Ossip Gabrilowitsch as permanent conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, during his tenure the hall was the scene of performances by many renowned artists. Later, as the Paradise Theatre, it offered outstanding concert jazz. It was the beneficiary of a successful community-wide historic preservation effort that began in 1970.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Construction began on June 6, 1919, and the building was first occupied on opening night, October 23, 1919.

2. Original and subsequent owners: The building's first owner was the Orchestra Hall Corporation. The Detroit Trust Company acted as trustee for that corporation from 1919 to 1941, when the building was seized by the city for non-payment of taxes.

In 1963 the hall was purchased by the Nederlander Theatre Corporation from Max Osnos, a local businessman who had sought to sell it for over a year.

In 1970 the building was acquired by Gino's,a nation-wide fast-service restaurant chain,which planned to demolish it. An immediate public outcry and the work of several concerned citizens led to organizing the Save Orchestra Hall Committee, which raised funds to purchase the building and created a public interest in saving Orchestra Hall. The committee is now (1978) continuing a comprehensive program of restoration as Orchestra Hall serves its destined purpose as a concert hall and performing arts center.

3. Architect: C. Howard Crane, with his Associates Elmer George Kiehler and Cyril E. Schley. Charles Howard Crane was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on August 13, 1885, and began is career in that city as a draftsman in 1904. The following year he moved to Detroit where he was employed in the large architectural offices of Albert Kahn, and Smith, Hinchman, & Grylls, respectively, prior to entering independent practice in 1909. From the beginning, Crane specialized in the design of theatres, and by the end of his 23-year practice in Detroit he had to his credit some 250 theatres throughout the United States and Canada, including 50 in Detroit alone. Among his works were the Adams, Alhambra, Bonstelle, Broadway Strand, Capitol, Casino, Colonial, Columbia, Empress, Fine Arts, Fox, Kramer, Liberty, Madison, Majestic, Palace, Palms-State, Rialto, and United Artists theatres, and Orchestra Hall in Detroit; Fox theatres in Brooklyn (HABS NY-5554), Oakland, and St. Louis; United Artists theatres in Los Angeles and Chicago; the Roosevelt, Selwyn, and Harris theatres in Chicago; the Allen Theatre in Cleveland; the Earle in Washington, D.C.; the Music Box and Guild (now ANYA) theatres in New York City; and the Macomb Theatre in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. This last was built in 1921, shortly after Orchestra Hall, and in appearance is a smaller edition of it, seating only 1,400 people, as opposed to Orchestra Hall's 2,000.

With the onset of the Great Depression, Crane moved to England, and in London in the following years designed many theatres in that city as well as the vast Earl's Court sports and amusement center, which could accommodate up to 23,000 spectators. During and after World War II, Crane turned his talents to the design of industrial structures in the massive rebuilding and modernization

of British industry that took place at that time. Crane died in London, on August 14, 1952, aged 67 years.

During his years in Detroit, Crane stood at the peak of his profession as a theatre designer. His works are notable, particularly for their size and architectural variety. Few of the leading theatre designers had the opportunity to match the sheer vastness of Crane's Fox designs for Detroit and St. Louis, the largest theatres in the country at that time.

Unlike most theatre architects of the day, C. Howard Crane neither developed nor limited himself to a personal style. His designers were completely eclectic, working with equal ease in French, Italian, or Spanish Renaissance details, in the more exotic Middle or Far Eastern styles, in the delicate Adamesque, or in a rich combination, as for example in the Brooklyn Fox Theatre, where various disparate styles are blended together.

4. Builder and suppliers: Walbridge & Aldinger were the general contractors.

5. Original plans, construction, etc.: Copies of original plans, elevations, and sections by Crane's office are in the offices of Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates, Inc., Detroit.

6. Pipe organ: The building's large pipe organ was built by the Casavant Frères of Ste. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and was installed by the Hebert Organ Company in Detroit. Designed as a concert instrument, it was classical in its specifications and did not follow the growing trend of the day for imitative orchestral voicing and novelty sound effects in theatre organs. It was used to accompany motion pictures also, shown when the concert schedule permitted. The pipework of the organ was located in a chamber on the right of the auditorium, above and behind the box seats, and controlled by a portable console on stage. The organ was dedicated on March 17, 1920, with a performance of Camille Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3 for Organ, played by Marcel Dupré, then of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, and supported by Ossip Gabrilowitsch and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. After the orchestra's move to the Masonic Temple, the organ was relocated in a Methodist Church in west Detroit.

7. Alterations and additions: No significant structural alterations have been made to the building. The original cast-iron and glass marquees above the Woodward Avenue

and Parsons Street entrances and their later replacements have been removed. In 1976 the stage was refloored, and a new heating plant was installed. The balcony is now (1978) temporarily closed pending repairs to the fire escapes. Complete rewiring and new plumbing installations are under way. Restoration of the box parapet plaster ornament is progressing, and repair of the wall plaster is scheduled at the close of the 1978-79 season.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. The Detroit Symphony Orchestra: An orchestra was first organized in 1872 with forty members. As a repertory orchestra this group ceased activity in 1910, and the management was organized as the Detroit Orchestral Association, which, under the direction of N. J. Corey, sponsored a series of subscription concerts by visiting orchestras and conductors. In 1914, thanks to prominent women of Detroit, a new symphony orchestra was formed. From the University of Michigan's School of Music at Ann Arbor, from Detroit music conservatories, and from the city's theatre and cafe orchestras, sixty new members were selected. The women raised $800 to finance eight rehearsals for the first concert.

   The new group first appeared in March 1914 under the baton of Weston Gales. The first season consisted of but six concerts, held in the afternoon because there were insufficient funds to pay the evening rental of the Detroit Opera House. Then, donations by William H. Murphy and Horace Dodge made it possible to establish the orchestra on a more permanent basis, and Gales continued as conductor until 1918, when dissension and a fresh lack of money brought about his resignation.

   Ossip Gabrilowitsch, a Russian-born pianist and conductor whose excellent musicianship was internationally recognized, had appeared as guest conductor with Detroit's orchestra on his American tour. With reorganization pending, after Gales' departure from Detroit, efforts were made to keep Gabrilowitsch as a permanent conductor of the new group. A committee, broaching the subject to Gabrilowitsch, was informed by the artist that such buildings as the orchestra would be obliged to perform in, the Armory or the Arcadia Ballroom, were totally unsuited to the performance of serious music, and that he could not accept such a position under those circumstances. However, he gave a provisional acceptance on the condition that Detroit provide a proper home and

concert hall for the orchestra, in time for the next concert season. Then, continuing on his concert tour, Gabrilowitsch left the orchestra's fate in the city's hands.

The directors of the Orchestral Association decided that they had no choice but to build a new hall. A hastily assembled building committee selected C. Howard Crane as the architect. Within two weeks the committee had purchased the site of old Westminster Presbyterian Church and raised half a million dollars in building funds. Crane's general contractor--prepared to work day and night to rush the building to completion--promised that it would be finished on schedule. A telegram was sent to Gabrilowitsch on tour, informing him that a new 2,000 seat concert hall would be ready on time. The contractor further showed his zeal by starting demolition of the church at a corner of the roof while a final wedding ceremony was still going on inside.

If the clearing of the site was done with dispatch, the construction was equally swift. The time from the moment of the removal of the first shovelfull of earth for the foundations of Orchestra Hall to the moment when concert-goers in evening dress walked under the marquee on its opening night was just four months and 17 days. This inaugural concert for Orchestra Hall took place on October 23, 1919, before an audience made up of Detroit's leading citizens, and members of musical organizations throughout the State. Some workmen, busy in the building until concert time, left quietly through the back door.

The hall itself was somewhat less than resplendent, as the decorative work had not yet been completed. However, the critical acclaim accorded the opening program gave ample testimony to the skill of Ossip Gabrilowitsch as conductor of the musically ambitious program.

The scores for Beethoven's Dedication of the House Overture had failed to arrive in time for rehearsal, and Gabrilowitsch used instead Weber's Overture to Oberon to open the concert. The baton was then turned over to Associate Conductor Victor Kolar, as Gabrilowitsch and English pianist Harold Bauer performed Mozart's Concerto in E Flat for two pianos and orchestra. Following the intermission, the two pianists were joined on stage by Olga Samaroff at a third piano, presenting

Bach's Concerto in C Major for three pianos and orchestra. The program was concluded with Beethoven's C Minor Symphony. "Never in the city's history," according to the Michigan Historical Commission "had such a galaxy of stars been gathered together /as those/ to assist in the dedication." Gabrilowitsch, with only two weeks of rehearsal time available, produced cooperation and unanimity of ensemble in the newly-formed 90-player orchestra that promised well for the future.

2. Ossip Gabrilowitsch: Ossip Salomonowitsch Gabrilowitsch was born in Saint Petersburg, Russia on February 17, 1878. He studied music at the Imperial Conservatory there directly under Anton Rubinstein and won the Rubinstein Prize in 1894. He later studied with Leschetizky in Vienna and at the age of 18 made a concert tour of Germany, Austria, and England. In 1906 he married the singer Clara Clemens, a daughter of Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens). During 1910-1914 Gabrilowitsch conducted the Munich Konzertverein. After conducting in Munich, Vienna, Paris, and London, he toured the United States again in 1917-1918. Those concerts were so highly acclaimed that his services were sought by the Detroit Orchestral Association as permanent conductor. (He became a United States Citizen in 1921.) During his innovative tenure of sixteen years as Conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Gabrilowitsch initiated musical lectures to deepen music appreciation in Detroit. He made numerous guest appearances, alternating with Leopold Stokowski during the 1929 and 1930 tours of the Philadelphia Orchestra and conducting the New York Philharmonic along with Arturo Toscanini, just prior to Toscanini's appointment as Philharmonic conductor.

Ossip Gabrilowitsch made the musical reputation of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and concurrently raised Detroit's level of music appreciation. Both of these achievements were made possible by his insistence upon having a proper concert hall in which to work and upon the excellence of the hall created for him, and for Detroit, by C. Howard Crane. During the Gabrilowitsch years, Orchestra Hall had 268 Detroit premiers, 18 American premiers, and three world premiers. Among the artists appearing in concert were Enrico Caruso, Pablo Casals, Mischa Elman, George Gershwin, Jascha Heifetz, Dame Myra Hess, Joseph Hofmann, Vladimir Horowitz, Wanda Landowska, Lotte Lehman, Gregor Piatigorsky, Serge Prokofiev, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Arthur Rubinstein,

Igor Stravinsky, and Efrem Zimbalist. In 1926 Gabrilowitsch founded the National Youth Orchestra (now the National Arts Academy of Interlochen, Michigan) in Orchestra Hall, and in 1931 Orchestra Hall became the site of the first national radio broadcast of live symphonic music. When Ossip Gabrilowitsch died in 1936, his funeral was held in Orchestra Hall, the building that had been the price of his coming to Detroit and that was one of his greatest contributions to the city.

3. Subsequent history: After the death of Gabrilowitsch, the orchestra was led by Assistant Conductor Victor Kolar until the appointment of Franco Ghione of La Scala Opera in Milan as Conductor. From 1934 to 1939 Ford's Sunday Evening Hour was broadcast live from the Orchestra Hall Stage. However, the Great Depression and competition from subsidized auditoria in the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Masonic Temple soon made it impossible to maintain Orchestra Hall, and in 1939 the orchestra moved to the Masonic Temple. Briefly, the orchestra had its own hall again, the Wilson Theatre renamed Music Hall. In 1951 the Detroit Symphony Orchestra was finally reorganized on a sound financial basis, and after five years of performances in the Masonic Temple under the baton of Paul Paray, the Orchestra moved to its present home, the Henry and Edsel Ford Auditorium.

Orchestra Hall had been designed with motion picture projection and complete stage facilities and had been used occasionally for moving pictures, Burton Holmes travel lectures, and other programs. Upon the departure of the Orchestra in 1939, it became a moving picture and vaudeville house first renamed the Town Theatre and later the Paradise. The latter name derived from "Paradise Valley," a night club district of Detroit. The renamed Orchestra Hall specialized in concerts by leading jazz musicians including Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Earl Hines, Billie Holiday, and the Ink Spots. With the decline of vaudeville and the rise of television, the Paradise Theatre was acquired by a black congregation and renamed the Church of Our Prayer

Phonograph records of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Gabrilowitsch had been very successfully made by Victor in 1928 and released in 1929. In 1951 Mercury Records began a series of long-playing recordings of

major American orchestras and in 1953 made a recording contract with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The acoustics of the cavernous Masonic Temple were unsatisfactory for recording purposes, and the Music Hall proved to be even less so. Remembering the Gabrilowitsch recordings made in Orchestra Hall, the producer arranged for the use of the Orchestra's former home. The excellent acoustics of the building were admirably suitable for recording, and symphonic music again resounded there until the last recording was made in 1956. The Church of Our Prayer had departed during that period, but recordings had continued until falling plaster made continued use of the building too hazardous. /A discography of recordings that demonstrate the acoustical properties of Orchestra Hall is an addendum to this Photo-Data Book, SEE APPENDIX./

Orchestra Hall stood empty and boarded up until 1970, except for a brief interlude beginning in 1963, when it was purchased by the Nederlander Theatre Corporation, which began restoration after receiving a Federal redevelopment loan of $350,000 in 1964 but soon abandoned the attempt. In 1970 Gino's Restaurant Corporation bought the property. Demolition was begun, but with the laudable cooperation of the new owners it was suspended until the Save Orchestra Hall Committee (SOH) had raised enough money to buy the building. SOH established a continuing fund-raising operation for the preservation and restoration of Orchestra Hall. In 1971 Orchestra Hall was entered on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1972 the American Film Festival awarded second prize to a short subject filmed by SOH and titled We Have Temporarily Lost Our Sound. A sequel to this film starring Orchestra Hall emphasizes the Paradise Theatre phase of its history. The auditorium has been used for many fund-raising events in spite of its condition and is now (1978), as restoration progresses, being used for concerts by Orchestra-Detroit, an organization of paid professional musicians. An educational group, the Arts Center Music School, gives instruction in the building six days per week.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Two photographs, an exterior and an interior taken circa 1920, are in the possession of the Save Orchestra Hall Committee, Inc. A perspective drawing made in 1919 is owned by the Detroit Historical Society.

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3. Interviews and correspondence: John A. Alexander, Vice President, Public Relations Counselors, Inc., Detroit; Alice C. Dalligan, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library; Paul Ganson, Bassoonist, Detroit Symphony Orchestra; David Hall, Head, Rogers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York City; Prof. Harry Hepburn Hall /acoustics/, Physics Department, University of New Hampshire, Durham; Beatrice Jacoby, Detroit Historical Society; Agatha Pfeiffer Kalkanis, Chief, Music Department, Detroit Public Library; Sandor Kallai, Executive Director, Save Orchestra Hall, Inc.; Dixon B. Kellogg and Elmer G. Kiehler, early members of C. Howard Crane's office, since deceased; Carl Kosanke, Organist, Detroit Symphony Orchestra and member SOH Committee; Richard W. Mangon, President, SOH Committee; Marshall Turkin, Mgr., Detroit Symphony Orchestra; R. L. Vickrey, owner, McComb Theatre, Mt. Clemens, MI; Douglas Wheeler, Hayes Concert Bureau, Washington, D.C.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest and merit: Built in 1919, Orchestra Hall was the first true concert hall in Detroit and is considered to be one of the finest concert halls in the United States. In design it is typical of large theatres of its day, a restrained and elegant adaptation of the Renaissance style that preceded the exhuberant eclecticism which characterized theatres in the following decade. Orchestra Hall's dignified appearance and superb acoustics attest to the ability of C. Howard Crane, a Detroit architect who was to become one of the country's most noted and prolific theatre designers during the great age of the movie palace.

2. Acoustics: Crane designed Orchestra Hall in the year that Wallace C. Sabine, the founder of the modern science of acoustics, died. Although Sabine's success with McKim, Mead and White's Symphony Hall in Boston was well known to the architectural profession, the state of the art remained somewhat empirical. Hence, a statement by Crane's associate Elmer George Kiehler that the superlative acoustics of Orchestra Hall were partly a matter of luck

seems plausible. According to Kiehler, when Crane simply built a building that pleased the eye, it was found pleasing to the ear as well. Be that as it may, from solo artist to full orchestra, vacant rehearsal hall to final concert, the live and perfect sound was carried dependably to the farthest and cheapest seats in the house. (Even the seats themselves contributed to the excellent acoustics. Their laminated wooden backs were so upholstered as to minimize any difference in sound that might occur because of varying attendance or size of performing ensemble.) Consequently, Orchestra Hall possessed that very special quality, called by the musicians "effortless acoustics," enabling the musician to draw from his instrument, with ease, the very best that it was designed to give, and transmitting this music throughout the hall with complete fidelity.

3. Condition of fabric: Silence engulfed Orchestra Hall for years, and although the building remains structurally sound, neglect has taken its toll. A study of the building's condition and renovation requirements was made in 1973 by Smith, Hinchman and Grylls Associates, Inc., of Detroit. It states that entrances on Woodward Avenue and Parsons Street were almost totally destroyed, but that damage to masonry and joints was fortunately confined to the base and around doorways. The central entrance on Woodward Avenue was blocked by a ticket sales window, and the entry doors and store fronts had been removed or badly vandalized, while the store areas themselves were ruined. Upper windows had suffered some weathering and decay from lack of maintenance, and some carved wooden trim of their mullions was missing. The emergency exit stairs are quite rusted, with parts missing, and deteriorated wall anchorages. The condition of the structural framing and most of the concrete and masonry remains very good.

   As of 1973, all roofing materials were beyond repair and have since been replaced. Water leaks from burst tanks and rain conductors had reached the interior to warp floors, streak walls, and damage large areas of paint and decorative plaster. Many decorative elements had been removed from the building, and a minor fire had destroyed a small area of seating. Most equipment and fixtures had been vandalized and were both inoperable and unrepairable. The stage works were almost completely missing, deteriorated, or antiquated and no longer functional. Toilet rooms were in serious disrepair. Both plumbing and electrical installations required

complete overhauling or replacement. Subsequent repairs have corrected much of this condition.

In the auditorium, the condition of the valuable ceiling appears generally good, with only minor areas of deterioration. Molds can be made from the intact areas to provide castings for new decorative plaster. Wood or metal trim can be cleaned, repaired, and refinished, and wood surfaces can be treated with approved fire-retardant finishes; decorative fixtures, draperies, and carpets can be replaced. The black and white marble floors are essentially intact and repairable.

If the existing seats needing serious repair are essentially sound, and therefore restored, care should be taken that the acoustics of the auditorium are not adversely affected by the introduction of excessively sound-absorbing upholstery.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Layout, shape, and massing: Orchestra Hall is a large, well-proportioned, almost rectilinear block. Its regularity is broken only by the upward projection of the stage loft's skylight at the west end, by a central Greek cruciform penthouse with metal ventilators, and by the volume of the low truss roof, which, when seen from a distance, still rises only slightly above the tile coping of the parapet walls.

2. Number of stories: The front portion of the building is three stories high. However, as the rear portion of the balcony and the attic rise well above the level of the third floor offices, it is more closely equivalent to five stories altogether.

3. Wall construction, design, and decoration: The street facades of Orchestra Hall are of limestone and light yellow brick. The principal facade is seven bays wide. The lower story is faced in limestone, and forms a base for the facade treatment. Above it is a five-bay-wide pilaster order, with entablature, the interstices between the pilasters containing two levels of office windows. The entire composition of pilasters, windows, and entablature, is treated as an ornamental unit which is applied to the brick face of the building. The unit entablature crosses the central portion of the facade at approximately three-quarters of its full height. The facade as a whole has an elaborate main entablature.

The base story is laid up in large ashlar blocks. In the outer two bays on each side are wooden storefronts, each composed of a single square window and a door, the unit surrounded by a recessed band of stone. The central three bays of the first story are treated as a unit, also surrounded by a recessed stone band. Within are five pairs of entrance doors (the central one converted at some point to an external box office), separated from one another by heavy square stone piers. At some distance above the doors the facade is crossed by Greek fretwork in a wide, horizontal band, broken by a patera over each column. Above this is a plain projecting belt course which terminates the stonework, and provides a base for the upper architectural treatment.

In the upper stories, the central five bays of the facade are articulated by a row of colossal, flat, unfluted pilasters of the Renaissance Composite order. The pilasters are surmounted by an entablature with a wide frieze embellished with wreaths at each column point, and a dentil cornice. Within the bays are two levels of tripartite casement windows, with highly decorated metal spandrel panels at the intermediate floor level. Above the upper windows are large limestone panels decorated with central leaf swags supported on each side by a candelabrum. Below each of these panels, each window group is topped by an architrave supported by a pair of plain pilasters which are engaged into the primary pilasters and frame the windows at both levels.

Each outer bay of the upper facade is faced with creamy yellow brick broken only by a window at the second-story level. Each of the windows has an architrave and is surmounted by a hood-molding bearing a central cartouche. The facade is capped by a broad limestone entablature motif with an elaborate frieze ornamented by bay-wide triads of leafy swags, ribbons, and rosettes separated above each pilaster line by a narrow cartouche. Above the frieze is a slightly projecting stone cornice band ornamented with a Greek fret. At the center of the building, a large elliptical cartouche extends from the bottom of the frieze to a point above the "cornice." The cartouche is topped by a delicately carved female head with mantling that extends downward to merge into the central triad of the frieze swags. A small horizontal block panel capping the cornice band behind the central cartouche is flanked by scrolls of horizontal console form. The entire entablature motif returns one full bay at the side elevations.

The Parsons Street elevation is seven bays deep and is constructed of creamy yellow brick above a limestone first story. The easternmost bay is capped by the front entablature return. The other bays express the belt course and frieze lines in brick, and each has a large upper panel framed in projecting bands of brick. The westernmost bay contains the stage loft and projects slightly forward of the main wall plane. The brick cornice line continues across it, and its uppermost portion is ornamented by a small brick-banded panel. The most prominent feature of the Parsons Street elevation is the formerly roofed open exit stair, or steel fire escape, which crosses it diagonally from the balcony exits. The limestone first story has two groups of exit doors and a store front. The easternmost bay has a pair of second-story windows with an architrave like those of the principal facade end bays. All second-floor windows are fronted by simply designed wrought-iron railings.

4. Marquees: The building originally had widely projecting planar iron and glass marquees suspended over the front entrances and along the Parsons Street side to shelter the side exits.

5. Roof shape and covering: Although architecturally treated as flat and invisible, the low truss roof does actually rise above the walls, and is highly visible from a distance as the hall is approached. Covering is a bituminous roofing material.

6. Chimneys and ventilators: Atop the central roof is a very large metal ventilator with its roof in the shape of a Greek cross.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: The major part of the building's volume is taken up by the auditorium, which occupies the entire width of the building in its central section. To the west of the seating area is the stage, and to the east, behind the auditorium, are the lobbies. In the upper stories of the building, above the lobbies, are the former offices of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Association.

2. Architectural and decorative treatment of interior spaces:

a. Main lobby: The main entrance opens into a shallow vestibule beyond which is the main lobby. The lobby is quasi-elliptical, having curved ends but straight

sides. The front and rear walls each have five pairs of doors, and the paneled end walls, articulated by plain pilasters, each have a round-headed archway through which the marble stairs ascend. The marble bases of the wooden pilasters vary in height to compensate for the slight slope of the marble floor. The broad, flat main ceiling area is elliptical and has a deep rinceau frieze and delicate modillion cornice. A small but ornamental metal chandelier is suspended at the center of the ellipse.

b. Upper lobby: Directly above the main lobby is a rectangular upper lobby, an area at the auditorium mezzanine level but unconnected with it. The ends of this lobby are almost entirely occupied by the stair runs descending to the main lobby and ascending to the balcony. The side walls are ornamented by rectangular panels above and below an unmarked dado line. They are articulated by pilaster responds behind freestanding square Renaissance Ionic fluted piers and by antae. The floor is marble. The flat ceiling has shallow coffers, some containing ventilating grilles, and abuts heavy beams "supported" on the four piers and four antae. The beam soffits are ornamented with parallel rows of guilloches. A relatively small chandelier hangs from the central ceiling coffer.

c. Auditorium: The auditorium is almost rectangular in plan, its basic shape being modified by side walls that curve inward somewhat to join the proscenium wall. The rear half of the auditorium contains a deep balcony, below which is a horseshoe-shaped mezzanine of individually lobed boxes that sweep around the perimeter of the hall, extending forward from the line of the balcony rail. The floor is gently bowled, and the ceiling is composed of three flat levels, which step upward toward the rear of the auditorium space.

The side walls of the auditorium are of plaster, scored and painted in imitation of limestone ashlar. Their principal architectural treatment occurs in their three-bayed, curved portions forward of the balcony. Each of these areas is divided horizontally by a row of six projecting mezzanine boxes, stepped downward toward the proscenium, their soffits equidistant from the sloping floor below.

Below the boxes in the two forward bays are rectangular door openings, framed by simple architraves, and leading to emergency exits. The rear bay holds a double-arched, false window opening, set within a rectangular enframement topped by a frieze and cornice, and decorated with projecting bosses. In each of the four lower forward wall segments is a large circular ornamental ventilation grille.

Above the mezzanine boxes, each bay contains a high arched opening, surrounded by a wide frame containing delicate foliate ornament in low relief, and marked by rosettes at the spring and apex points of the arch. The wall areas between the arches contain pendant lighting fixtures high above which ornamental cartouches are applied. Above the row of arches is a frieze of alternating wide and narrow rinceau panels, a wide panel occurring above each of the three arches. Above the frieze is a denticulated modillion cornice, and surmounting the cornice is a deeper band of panels corresponding to those in the frieze and forming a kind of parapet motif. The narrow vertical panels are ornamented with floral garlands, the wide, horizontal panels with a large wreath-encircled cartouche flanked by winged cherubs. On the left auditorium wall the forward two wide panels in both frieze and parapet motif are organ grilles; on the right, all three are grilles.

The cornice and upper range of panels continue across the front, or proscenium wall, of the auditorium. The proscenium arch is elliptical, ornamented with a wide cove containing floral baskets, with a central cartouche at the keystone. Around the inner edge of the cove is a heavy rope molding. Triangular corner spandrel panels between the cornice and the curve of the proscenium arch are framed with bands containing foliate ornament and projecting bosses.

The side walls of the auditorium above the balcony are also treated in imitation of ashlar, and are articulated by recessed panels. The band of ornamental panels above the cornice line in the forward portion of the room is almost equal in height to the first of two upward steps of the ceiling. The two bays which make up this central section of the side walls are crowned with plaster relief panels ornamented with gryphons and lyres. These panels are continued across the rear-facing surface of the ceiling step, where they function as ventilating grilles over ducts.

The second upward step of the ceiling is shallower than the first, and the upper edge of the rear four wall bays is ornamented with a correspondingly narrower band of simple recessed panels, which also are carried across the reveal of the ceiling step. The rear wall of the auditorium contains two bays of recessed panels to either side of the central projection and spotlight booth.

The auditorium ceiling consists of three flat sections, stepped upward toward the rear of the hall. The forward section, occupying the area in front of the balcony, is divided into a pattern of rectangular and curved but only lightly coffered panels by projecting ornamental moldings. From the central panel is suspended a wide flat circular chandelier. The central area of the ceiling is divided into three equal bays, each containing a central octagonal panel surrounded by small square panels. From each principal panel hangs a disk-like lighting fixture, duplicating at smaller scale the design of the main chandelier. The rear portion of the ceiling is even simpler in character, the panels all being rectangular, and the lighting disks hung closer to the ceiling plane.

The mezzanine level of the theatre has an independent entrance from the street. Its seating is arranged in a series of 28 boxes, each separated from its neighbor by a low paneled wooden partition, and fronted by a curved parapet paneled on the inside and ornamented with a garlanded cartouche on the outside. The row of curved fasciae, stepped gently upward across the side walls and curving across the rear center of the auditorium, is one of the hall's handsomest design features. As the mezzanine does not connect with the principal lobby spaces, it is provided with a spacious lounge area to its rear, where side and rear walls are grained in imitation of wood paneling. An ornamental, non-functioning fireplace with a marble mantelpiece is centered on the rear wall.

The balcony seating is divided horizontally by a wide aisle into upper and lower sections, in turn divided above into five sections by six stepped aisles, and below into four sections by five stepped aisles. The balcony parapet is a gentle concave curve, treated in a simple modification of the mezzanine parapet. Three rigid light fixtures are set into and are slightly extruded from the balcony ceiling.

d. Stage facilities: The stage was originally equipped to handle all types of production, but is particularly suited to concert use because of its shallow wings, which provide little space for scenery storage. There is a high fly gallery at either end of the stage, and at the north end there are four tiers of dressing rooms.

Large organ chambers at either side of the auditorium are accessible from the fly galleries flanking the stage. Although the organ has been removed, some of its original framing members remain in place. The sound entered the auditorium through the frieze and parapet motif grilles and the upper portions of the side wall arches.

The orchestra pit is of particularly interesting construction, consisting of three sections which span the width of the stage apron. The outer two sections are forward of the apron, and rest on independent screw-type elevators. The rear portion is under the apron, and provides auxiliary space at the lower pit level. All or any part of the pit may be elevated to stage level for large orchestral or choral productions; to the floor level for additional seating for chamber music; or left at the lower level to provide a Bayreuth-style pit, large enough for the fullest opera orchestra. Remarkably flexible, this orchestra pit would do justice to the most modern concert hall.

D. Site and Surroundings:

Orchestra Hall stands at the northwest corner of Woodward Avenue and Parsons Street, directly across Woodward Avenue from the Professional Plaza of the Detroit Medical Center, one of the largest medical centers in existence. At present, parking for Orchestra Hall is available in Professional Plaza, which has 1,700 spaces. Behind Orchestra Hall is the Chapel of St. Theresa, and the Girl's Catholic Central High School. The hall is about a mile from downtown Detroit. The street number frequently in print associated with Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward Avenue, is the mailing address of the Save Orchestra Hall Committee. There is no street number on Orchestra Hall itself.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Orchestra Hall's documentation was prepared as part of a Historic American Buildings Survey project to record selected representative examples of theatre design in the United States during the first third of the 20th century. The project, begun under James C. Massey, former HABS Chief, was carried out under general supervision from Dr. John Poppeliers, the succeeding Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey since 1972. Project photographs of Orchestra Hall for the Survey are by Allen Stross, of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Two historical photographs c. 1920 by Manning Brothers, of Highland Park, Michigan, were supplied courtesy of Save Orchestra Hall, Incorporated. One photograph of a perspective rendering is by courtesy of the Detroit Historical Society. The historic photographs were archivally prepared by HABS photographer, Jack E. Boucher. Notes on early recordings and a discography were supplied by David Hall, Head, Rogers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, New York Public Library. Copies of Crane's original architectural drawings were supplied by Smith, Hinchman, & Grylls, Associates, Inc., of Detroit. Final preparation of the manuscript was made by Denys Peter Myers, HABS architectural historian, in 1978.

APPENDIX

Taken from notes of David Hall, Head, Rogers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center, New York, New York, the following information reveals the history of recordings in Orchestra Hall from 1928 until 1956, and elsewhere until 1962. Compiled for HABS by Hall, 1972.

Early Recordings: Cross-checking of the Victor catalog numbers and dates indicates that all of the Gabrilowitsch recordings for Victor were made in 1928, as listed below. (They were released in 1929.)

LP Recordings: The Detroit Symphony Orchestra's entry into the LP recording era began during the winter of 1953, possibly in February or March, with the Masonic Auditorium as the initial recording locale. While sonic results in Masonic Auditorium were deemed as perfectly adequate for the somberly scored Franck Symphony in D Minor, scheduled for this session, it was the opinion of this writer in his capacity as producer that a hall with brighter acoustics would be necessary to do justice to the Ravel Bolero, Rimsky-Korsakov Capriccio Espagnol and Wagner excerpts scheduled for the immediately following sessions. The writer, having been an active record collector since 1932 and a reviewer since 1940, remembered well the excellent sound of the 1929 Gabrilowitsch discs from Orchestra Hall--and at once suggested to the Orchestra management that an attempt be made to obtain the old Orchestra Hall (then the Church of Our Prayer) for recording purposes. First an inspection was made of the Wilson Theatre where the orchestra had given concerts during the Reichhold-Krueger regime, but this was judged by all concerned as acoustically unsuitable, even more so than Masonic Auditorium. So the decision was made to negotiate for the use of Orchestra Hall, despite the dilapidated condition of its dressing room and locker facilities. As it turned out, the acoustics of the place were superb. And though a return to Masonic Auditorium for the final recording of the initial Mercury series was made for the Beethoven Seventh Symphony, the Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel, and Wagner works recorded in Orchestra Hall came up to all basic expectations.

All subsequent recordings of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Paul Paray through March of 1956 were done in Orchestra Hall. A marked improvement in sound quality was achieved, beginning in the fall 1953 recordings, when the more sensitive Telefunken 201 microphone was substituted for the earlier U-47 model.

Stereo Recording: While experimental stereophonic recording was done with the Detroit Symphony beginning with the initial 1953 sessions, the first stereo recordings to be released commercially on the Mercury label were those from the fall 1955 sessions, which included Debussy's Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, La Mer, Iberia, and Schumann's Second Symphony. The last Orchestra Hall recording to be made was Chausson's B Flat Symphony, March 24, 1956.

In distinction to practices of most other record companies, the Mercury stereophonic recordings were microphoned and taped on channels and with equipment separate from that used for monophonic masters. While the monophonic taping was done (beginning in fall 1953) with the single Telefunken 201 microphone feeding a double set of Fairchild tape machines, the stereophonic taping was done with three Telefunken U-47 microphones, hung in line parallel to the stage and feeding Ampex machines using half-inch width tape, in contrast to the standard ¼-inch width. Thus the sound of the monophonic as against the stereophonic discs originating in Orchestra Hall differs, in that the monophonic discs have a

more immediate brilliance and sense of acoustic ambience, while the stereo discs have more presence, as well as the illusion of localization and depth.

Beginning with the fall of 1956, Mercury's recording program with the Detroit Symphony continued in Ford Auditorium; but as this writer predicted earlier in the spring, after inspecting the Auditorium before the seats were in, the recordings were no great success sonically, reflecting as they did all too accurately the colorless and rather harsh acoustic of the hall. Later sessions with the Detroit Symphony, just prior to Paray's departure, were done in the acoustically excellent Wayne State University Auditorium. These included among other works the Berlioz Symphonie Fantastique and a new version of the Franck Symphony. All Mercury Detroit Symphony recordings made subsequent to spring 1956 until expiration of the Mercury recording contract in 1962 were done under musical supervision of Harold Lawrence, who in 1968 became manager of the London Symphony Orchestra.

A list of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra recordings done for Mercury in Orchestra Hall follows herewith, with original issue numbers appearing first, and re-issue numbers appearing last. Please note that the only releases in this series issued in true stereophonic sound are SR 90010 (Debussy); SR 90102 (Schumann); SR 90107 (Wagner); SR 90017 (Chausson). All other items issued as "stereo" on Mercury or on its low-price Wing Label is of the "electronically processed" type.

With the exception of MG 50044 (Tristan Prelude and Liebestod) and MG 50020 (Ravel Bolero, Rimsky-Korsakov Capriccio Espagnol) all original issue numbers (MG and SR) reflect accurately the acoustic ambience of Orchestra Hall as picked up by the microphones used. In the instance of MG 50020, slight artificial reverberation was added subsequent to original recording to further enhance brilliance and acoustic ambience. In MG 50044, an electronic mishap caused . . . this entire selection to be affected by a hum . . . filtered out later, with deleterious consequences.

Victor Recordings, 1928: 1337 (10") Chabrier: España Rapsodie; 6833 (12") Brahms: Academic Festival Overture; 6834 (12") Brahms: Serenade No. 2 in A Major - Minuet, Gluck: Orfeo ed Euridice - Dance of the Blessed Spirits; 6845 (12") Tchaikovsky: Serenade in C for Strings - Waltz, Suite No. 1, Marche Miniature, Modest Altschuler: Russian Soldiers' Song.

Mercury Recordings made in Orchestra Hall, Paul Paray, Conductor: /DPL = Detroit Public Library/

MG 50020 Ravel: Bolero; Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnol. Recorded mid-February 1953.

MG 50021 Wagner: Lohengrin - Preludes Acts I & III; Tannhäuser Overture; Die Walküre - Ride of the Valkyries; Die Meistersinger: Prelude. Recorded mid-February 1953. Re-issued as Mercury Wing 14015 mono/18015 electronically processed stereo.

MG 50028 Rimsky-Korsakov: Symphony No. 2 (Antar); Russian Easter Overture. Recorded spring 1953. Re-issued as Mercury Wing 14817 mono, 18017 electronically processed stereo (n.n. Telefunken 201 microphone used for this and all subsequent Orchestra Hall monophonic recordings).

MG 50029 Franck: Psyché (orchestral movements); Fauré: Pavane; Ravel: La Valse. Recorded Spring 1953. Re-issues - Wing 14009/18009 (Fauré only); 14029/18029 Ravel only. /DPL/

MG 50035 Dukas: The Sorcerer's Apprentice; Roussel: The Spider's Feast; Fauré: Pelléas et Melisande - Incidental Music. Recorded late December 1953. Re-issues - Wing 14009/18009 (Dukas and Fauré only); 14036/18036 (Roussel only).

MG 50036 Liszt: Les Préludes; Schumann: Symphony No. 4 in D Minor. Recorded late December 1953. Re-issued as Wing 14004/18004. /DPL/

MG 50039 Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnol, Russian Easter Overture - recoupled from MG 50021 and MG 50028.

MG 50044 Wagner: Tristan and Isolde - Prelude and Liebestod; The Flying Dutchman - Overture; Siegfried - Forest Murmurs; Parsifal - Good Friday Spell. N. B. Tristan Prelude and Liebestod filter-processed after original taping to remove hum. Tristan recorded spring 1955, others in late November 1954.

MG 50055 Beethoven: Symphony No. 6 in F (Pastoral). Recorded November 26, 1954. Re-issued as Wing 14001/18001. /DPL/

MG 50056 Chabrier: España Rapsodie; Ravel: Rapsodie Espagnole; Ibert: Escales. Recorded late November 1954. Re-issued as Wing 14030/18030 (less Chabrier). /DPL/

MG 50057 Brahms: Symphony No. 4 in E Minor. Recorded March 26, 1955. Re-issued as Wing 14003/18003. /DPL/

MG 50101/SR 90010 Debussy: Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun (on MG 50101 only); Iberia; La Mer. Re-issues - Iberia and La Mer as part of MG 50372/SR 90372. Recorded late November 1955.

MG 50102/SR 90102 Schumann: Symphony No. 2 in C. Recorded December 2, 1955.

MG 50107/SR 90107 Wagner: Die Götterdämmerung - Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Parsifal - Prelude; Tristan und Isolde - Prelude to Act III; Siegfried Idyll. Recorded late March 1956. Re-issued as Wing 14054/18054.

MG 50108/SR 90017 Chausson: Symphony in B-flat. Recorded March 24, 1956. Re-issued as part of MG 50331/SR 90331.

Addendum: 2-track stereo tape issues --

MAS 5-20 Wagner Rhine Journey and Siegfried Idyll from SR 90107.

MBA 5-8 Debussy Iberia from SR 90010.

MDS 5-26 Chausson Symphony from SR 90017.

At the time the Hall lists were received, August 1972, none of the above-listed recordings were available through normal retail store channels.

Decca record catalogs indicate there were Detroit Symphony recordings under Victor Kolar in 1940, but presumably these were made in the Masonic Auditorium, to which the orchestra had moved in 1939. Mr. Hall gives these numbers as follows: 23172 (10") Enesco: Rumanian Raphsody No. 1 (with cuts); 29071 (12") Victor Herbert: American Fantasy; A-157 (23156/7) (10") Rossini: William Tell Overture; A-164 (29072/5) (12") Rimsky-Korsakov: Sheherazade (with cuts); A-169 (29076/7) Grieg: Peer Gynt Suites.

Additional Mercury recordings presumably made in Orchestra Hall may be found in the Detroit Public Library, Numbers MG 50174, MG 50191, MG 50211, and MG 50215, cataloged as DPL No. 332-5852, -6570, -7205, and -7179.

Note: "The Chausson Symphony recording, issued originally as MG 50108 (mono); SR 90017 stereo, was available in the mid-1970s in the Mercury Golden Import Series as SRI 75029. The recording of Debussy: La Mer; Iberia; Prelude to The Afternoon of a Faun--issued as MG 50101, MG 50372 (mono), SR 90372, SR 90010 was available in the mid-1970s as Mercury Golden Imports SRI 75053. The tape issues noted [above] antedated the SR stereo discs by at least two years."--David Hall